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BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Research Memorandum
RFE-56, November 5, 1962

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM: INR - Roger Hillsman

SUBJECT: Asian Reactions to the Cuban Crisis: October 27 - November 4, 1962

This report covers primarily the second week of the Cuban crisis, analyzing Asian responses to Khrushchev's agreement of October 28 to dismantle Soviet missiles in Cuba. A full analysis of Communist China's reaction than is contained in this report. The survey will be found in Peiping and the Cuban Crisis: October 22-31, Research Memorandum RFE-55, October 31, 1962.

ABSTRACT

The most significant Asian reaction to Khrushchev's agreement on the dismantling of Soviet missiles in Cuba came from Communist China where blistering editorial attacks on "interference in Cuba's internal affairs" all but explicitly charged Khrushchev with cowardice. Peiping's harsh line, sounded in public rallies, editorials, and an official note to Havana, adamantly supported Castro's demands, scoffed at Kennedy's assurances, and claimed the "full support of the Chinese people" for Cuba as "the first socialist country in Latin America." North Vietnam echoed its support for Castro's demands and its warnings against "US aggressive designs," but broke with Peiping in praise of the Soviet position. North Korea offered no comment of significance, while Outer Mongolia fully supported the Soviet "peaceful" move.

Free Asian reactions continued, on balance, to favor the US-UN stand. While Japanese press comment praised Khrushchev's prudence, it did not deny the necessity for American firmness on the Soviet missile moves. Press comment elsewhere followed predictable lines of support, silence, or opposition to US moves, depending upon the basic orientation of individual journals. Neutral governmental responses, however, remained surprisingly reserved with no public criticism from Burma, Cambodia, or Indonesia. US allies in the area continued to give full support. Once the crisis is resolved, neutral attitudes may reflect more sympathy for Cuba and respect for Khrushchev than praise for Kennedy. US allies may look for renewed assurances that negotiations between the US and the USSR will not affect their own interests. Problems of the area will loom larger than those in distant Cuba or Berlin, both for neutral and allies.

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Following Khrushchev's agreement to withdraw missiles from Cuba, Peiping struck an increasingly harsh note in its public statements which all but explicitly attacked the Soviet position. Beginning October 20, steadily rising Chinese Communist attention to the Cuban crisis reflected the "correct" position of Castro's regime which refused to "submit" before "imperialist demands." Peiping's pledges of "support" for Castro stressed the unity of "world revolutionary and peace-loving peoples," but less frequently mentioned the "socialist camp," much less the Soviet Union. Its first official comment on the Khrushchev-Kennedy agreement appeared in a blistering People's Daily editorial on October 31 which implicitly rejected the accord completely. An editorial in the November 1 issue of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee organ, Red Flag (broadcast October 31) repeated the key themes of the People's Daily editorial, categorically calling Cuba the "first socialist state in Latin America" and reviewing the history of the Cuban revolution in such a way as to make it appear almost a carbon copy of Chinese Communist revolutionary history. In the sharpest barb thrust at Khrushchev's position, the editorial warns, "Only by having unshakable faith in the great strength of the people and by relying on the people's revolutionary struggle can one avoid being cowed by the US imperialist military pressure or being deceived by its flowery words."

Peiping's encouragement of Castro's defiance of the USSR was formalized in a November 1 note from Chen I to the Cuban charge d'affaires in Peking. Terming Castro's demands "completely correct and reasonable," Chen further implicitly castigated Moscow for taking an "imperialist viewpoint" in asserting that Cuba's demands would not affect a settlement "by the big powers." Chen assured the Cubans of Chinese support no matter how "complicated the circumstances may be" and declared that Cuban rights "absolutely cannot be bartered." Although the Chinese note did not refer to the UN's role, editorials in the November 1 issues of TA KUNG PAO and KWANGMING DAILY, for the first time in Peiping comment, both warned against US use of the UN "to intervene" in Cuba's affairs. Judging from the propaganda, Peiping considers the Soviet missiles to be an internal Cuban affair. The KWANGMING DAILY editorial attacked the US for trying to deprive Cuba of "its strategic-defensive weapons." There was no CPR press comment on November 2, but NCNA transmitted a sympathetic report of Castro's November 1 speech, including his references to Soviet-Cuban differences.

NORTH KOREA

After an initial bellicose reaction which closely followed Peiping's line, North Korean propaganda on the crisis dropped off sharply after October 27 when Moscow's retreat became apparent, and subsequently has reflected the regime's apparent uncertainty about how to react to the accord. The press has included only relatively noncontroversial reports

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of Cuban rallies, and, judging from the press reviews, has reported neither the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange nor Castro's demands. The first reference to the dismantling of the missiles was contained in a November 2 home service commentary -- the first comment since the accord was reached. However, instead of referring to the Soviet agreement, the commentator simply charged that the US imperialists had sent U Thant to Cuba to arrange UN observation of the dismantling of the missile bases.

NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi first publicized the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement on October 30 and commented in a HINH DAN editorial the following day. While the editorial betrayed Hanoi's continued concern to support both Moscow and Peking, on balance HINH DAN more strongly backed the Peiping-Cuban position. Thus, the editorial declared that the Soviet action had aimed at a relaxation of tension and had been welcomed "by world public opinion," but the paper accorded the "Vietnamese people's" support not to the Soviet moves but "unreservedly" to Castro's five demands, including the takeover of Guantanamo. The editorial further warned that the US aggressive policy toward Cuba has not been abandoned, and in documenting its charges against US imperialism, referred to the "occupation of Taiwan." There has been no subsequent comment.

MONGOLIA

Mongolian comment on the Cuban crisis has reflected Ulan Bator's commitment to the Soviet Union, echoing the Moscow rather than the Peiping reaction. A November 1 URMEN editorial asserted that the outcome of the crisis represented another victory for the "peace forces" due to the policy of the USSR. A radio commentary the following day hailed Moscow's "peaceful initiative" as one which "enlightens the souls of millions of people throughout the world."

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NORTHEAST ASIA

There was considerable disparity in the reactions observed in Japan, the Republic of China (GRC) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) during what may be described as the second round on Cuba, i.e. the period since Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the Soviet missiles. Interest seems to have dropped off very quickly and sharply in the GRC and the ROK, but -- judging by press coverage -- apparently remains high in Japan. Another contrast was the apparent tendency of the Chinese Nationalists, and to a lesser extent the South Koreans, to regard a negotiated solution of the Cuban problem as disappointing. The Japanese, on the other hand, seem to have been much relieved and hopeful that a Cuban settlement might be a model for the compromise solution of other Cold War tensions.

To a great extent these divergent reactions reflect the various national positions. The Japanese, prosperous and united, see their best opportunity in the peaceful settlement of international tensions. The Chinese Nationalists and the South Koreans have no confidence that their national problems can be resolved peacefully and consequently are not disturbed by the prospects of clashes as long as they believe that the United States is militarily superior to the USSR.

JAPAN

Japanese reaction to the second round of Cuban developments is marked by expressions of relief coupled with urging that the momentum toward peaceable settlement of international disputes be maintained. The government has continued to support the actions taken by the United States as necessary under the circumstances. The press tendency to categorize the US action as reckless became less pronounced as danger receded but the continued high level of comment and discussion suggests that Cuba is still a very live issue. The ineffective left-wing efforts to mount demonstrations against the United States, however, leaves the impression that public opinion was either splintered on this very contentious issue or may have favored the United States.

The government maintained a vigorous defense of the United States, justifying the action against Cuba as necessary to preserve the balance of power essential to peace. Prime Minister Ikeda publicly stressed this point and questioned whether international law on blockades are relevant under the Cuban conditions. Foreign Minister Ohira went a step further and declared that the same principle of maintaining the existing balance of power would justify the continuation of the present United States bases in Japan, and presumably, elsewhere.

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This strong position has not been supported by the news media. The Asahi, probably the single most influential paper in Japan, called the government's balance of power concept "insufficient" to insure peace in today's world, and suggested that the question of United States bases in Turkey should also be studied. Yomiuri went further on October 30 in suggesting that the United States will find it hard to deny a formal Soviet request for the removal of the installations in Turkey and that it will be difficult for the United States to maintain its position on Berlin. Tokyo Radio, a semi-governmental but essentially autonomous organization, relayed this latter comment in a broadcast to Communist China and the USSR.

It appears, however, that this quid-pro-quo approach is recommended for the future and not for the resolution of the immediate crisis. Several papers had expressed fear that the offer of a deal on the Turkish bases would only complicate the Cuban problem and Asahi reacted in a similar negative way to Castro's effort to bring Guantaramo into the settlement.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The Republic of China probably finds a non-military settlement of the Cuban situation somewhat less than satisfying but has not openly criticized the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement for the removal of the Soviet missiles. The government does not seem to have taken an official stand on the agreement and this silence, in itself, is indicative in comparison with its earlier enthusiastic support of the United States blockade. Similarly, the press seems to have fallen silent after earlier urging that the blockade be continued and that steps be taken to destroy the missile sites. One paper commented that no effective results could be expected from the United Nations discussions.

The Chinese Nationalists may be concerned that a Cuban settlement will complicate their own military arrangements. Peiping has long characterized the offshore islands as bases for aggression. A Cuban settlement could increase the international pressures for abandonment of the islands, or perhaps reduce the prospects of the United States eventually providing the GRC with advanced weapons. This concern may have been increased when on October 29, the Soviet delegate to the UN complained that while Khrushchev was making peace United States military aid to the GRC "had sharply increased."

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The government and the press reacted somewhat indecisively to Khrushchev's agreement to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba. The outcome was welcomed but there was an evident doubt that Khrushchev should live up to his word. Moreover, there was some disappointment, not with the Cuban agreement per se, but because this apparent United States

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victory would not also resolve -- on Free World terms -- other international problems. This somewhat less than enthusiastic response was implicit in a Foreign Ministry statement which commented that despite this "certainly welcome news," all freedom loving people should remember and beware of the communist tactics of retreating one step and advancing two. Editorial comment was marked by admonitions that this should be only the first move toward the solution of other world problems, beginning with Berlin.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

From the reactions of our three Northeast Asian allies it is clear that at this time they have no misgivings that the United States is less powerful than the USSR. On the contrary, the Chinese Nationalists and the South Koreans feared that the United States would not push for a hard solution. While some Japanese feared the unforeseeable results of strong United States action, no important element seemed to question the military superiority of the United States.

It is also clear that the promised resolution of the Cuban question was not regarded as an outright victory for the United States, even though our firmness was seen as essential and the missile withdrawal was admittedly necessary to reduce tensions stirred up by the Soviets. Nevertheless, implicit in the reserved reactions of the Chinese Nationalists and the South Koreans, and explicit in the Japanese press, was the assumption that the USSR had gained something even in retreating from an initially ambitious venture.

In Japan, at least, the United States action was probably received with good grace because it was the application of non-nuclear force and pressures to reduce the likelihood of nuclear conflict.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

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During the second week of the Cuban crisis, reactions in Southeast Asia developed along the general lines that had emerged during the first week. Our allies continued to stand with us firmly. The press divided along customary lines although neutralist papers in Burma expressed some greater sympathy for the US position than is customarily the case. Sihanouk and Sukarno continued to display the reserve, unusual for them, that also marked the Burmese official reaction. Although the leaders of the three neutralist countries appeared to adopt almost identical public positions -- neutrality and exhortations in support of peaceful settlement -- their unspoken reactions probably differed markedly. Sihanouk, as evidenced by reported private comment and by the announcement on October 24 that Cambodia had agreed to exchange diplomatic representation with Cuba on the Ambassadorial level, leaned toward the Soviet side. Sukarno may have been motivated largely by an apparent desire to remain in a position from which he might appropriately seek to play a mediating role. Burmese official caution probably masked a consensus among military leaders that the US action was both correct and reassuring.

Even at the height of the crisis there was continued deep concern with problems more immediately affecting the interests of the area -- developments on the Sino-Indian border and in Laos, Cambodia's search for guarantees of its neutrality and territorial integrity resulting from its concern over border incidents with Thailand and Vietnam, Vietnam's struggle against insurgency, and the Philippine claim to North Borneo. With the removal of the immediate grave risk of major hostilities that was clearly and fearfully seen throughout the area, these preoccupations will again become completely central for Southeast Asian leadership and the US image will continue to be shaped largely by the posture we assume on these questions. Within these limitations, the Cuban crisis has probably generated throughout the area a more favorable view of US firmness in the face of aggressive threats and of US ability simultaneously to employ unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral channels in defense of vital interests. There will remain, however, a lingering concern that the US response to events in Cuba was influenced to an important degree by proximity and historical ties that would not apply in Southeast Asia, where US interest must be continuously demonstrated in order to remain convincing. There will also be continuing and somewhat contradictory concern with the terms and atmosphere of the ultimate settlement; sensitivity on the one hand on the part of such countries as Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines to the prospect that a general relaxation of tensions with the Soviets might weaken the US position in the Far East, and hopes, on the other, in neutralist countries, Malaya, and perhaps Australia and New Zealand, for a general relaxation or at least progress toward agreement in such fields as testing and disarmament. Depending

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on the circumstances, the disappointment of such hopes might redound to the disadvantage of the United States

SOUTH VIETNAM

GVN support for the United States position continued firm, although there appeared to be some falling off of interest during the second week. President Diem was undoubtedly reassured by the quick and decisive US action in Cuba. However, it seems unlikely that he has been materially shaken in his belief that, in the last analysis, the GVN can count with absolute confidence only upon itself. Cuban developments, in themselves, accordingly do not seem likely to increase Diem's receptivity to US proposals that he fears might weaken his own control of the situation in Vietnam and thereby, in his eyes, reduce GVN's strength.

The GVN, however, might be more receptive to standing US proposals for intensifying efforts to induce Viet Cong defections, if it appears that the Soviet stance has resulted in lowered morale among the Communist forces. Manifestations of DRV loss of confidence might also lead Diem to release more forces from static defense missions.

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THAILAND

US handling of the Cuban crisis has had a favorable impact on the US position in Thailand. The President's initiative and firm US action reaffirmed Thai confidence in the US as the leader of the free world. However, this response will not have decisive or far-reaching implications insofar as US relations with Thailand are concerned although US lack of firmness or inaction in Cuba, once the introduction of Soviet offensive missiles had been revealed, would have had an adverse and long-range impact on the Thai. US policies and actions in Southeast Asia weigh more heavily in Thai foreign relations considerations since they directly affect Thai national interests and are an indication to them of the value of the close alignment of Thailand with the US. Future developments in Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam (and especially in the former two), could quite easily dissipate whatever dividends resulted from the Cuban crisis. The US role in the Sino-Indian conflict will also be watched closely by the Thai and is likely to have a greater influence than events in Cuba although a lesser influence than developments in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. In sum, the effect of Cuba has been good but could easily be temporary and does not open any new avenues for exploitation on the part of the US in Thailand.

LAOS

US actions in the Cuban crisis have probably had some influence on communist estimates of the likelihood of forceful US reactions to developments in Laos and the level of risk involved for communist actions. It is doubtful, however, that the communists believe the US, as a result of Cuba, is likely to take a more aggressive posture in Laos. What direct impact the Cuban crisis may have on developments in Laos will depend on the subsequent evolution of US-Soviet and Sino-Soviet relations. If the Cuban crisis is finally resolved through US-Soviet cooperation and followed by meaningful US-Soviet negotiations on other outstanding issues, it may be possible for the US to exert effective pressure on the Soviet Union with respect to communist actions in Laos. Even without reference to the possibility that exacerbated Sino-Soviet relations might impel Communist China into more aggressive action in Laos, if only to point the contrast between its own determination to stand by its friends and Soviet desertion of Castro, the Cuban crisis does not appear to improve prospects for a more cooperative communist effort to ensure the success of the coalition government and the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in the immediate future.

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PHILIPPINES

The Philippine Government gave full support to the United States in the Cuban crisis, as did the general public, and was undoubtedly reassured by US firmness.

As a possible outgrowth of the Cuban situation, the GOP will become increasingly concerned about its southern flank and security in Southeast Asia. In this connection the GOP may possibly push its claim to North Borneo more vigorously with the hope of arriving at a face-saving settlement of this problem. The question of the Malayan Federation will loom large on the horizon as President Macapagal at present appears to have little faith in the ability of the proposed new Federation to resist Communist pressures.

The US bases in the Philippines will be secure from significant internal political pressure. At night, however, he faced with a request for substantially increased military assistance should the Cuban crisis not be resolved or should there be deterioration in the situation in Laos and South Vietnam.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

While there may have been some reservations (moral and legal) about our actions in the Cuban crisis, the Prime Minister immediately announced Australian support for the President's actions, recognizing that national security, and indeed the security of the Free World, demanded action to the exclusion of all other considerations.

The Cuban events will have no major effect on Australia's firm alliance with the United States. Australia may, however, point to the Soviet actions that precipitated the crisis as justifying their continuing concern over the transfer of sovereignty in West New Guinea from the Netherlands to Indonesia. Within Australia, the Labor Party may become more vocal in its demands for taking a new approach to the whole question of East-West relationships, particularly disarmament and nuclear weapons tests.

The official New Zealand response, while expressing support of the United States action, was somewhat reserved, emphasizing New Zealand's gratification that the US had taken the matter to the United Nations. When the USSR agreed to dismantle the bases, however, Prime Minister Holyoake stated that a starting point had been reached "for constructive negotiations on the Cuban problem and wider international issues."

Although as a consequence of our actions in Cuba the Labor Party may renew its clamor for New Zealand's withdrawal from all military alliances (it adopted a resolution to this effect in May 1962), the National Government will continue to support the US and USSR. It is also probable that both Government and opposition spokesmen will continue to press for an effective international agreement banning nuclear tests.

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INDONESIA

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Government officials, including Sukarno, seem to have understood that the issue was between the US and the Soviet Union not the US and Cuba. While there was a great deal of discussion of the issue, it was generally understood that the official Indonesian reaction would be determined by Sukarno.

Beginning with President Kennedy's speech on October 22, most Indonesian newspapers merely reported the events as they occurred without comment but the communist press and the ultra-nationalistic newspaper Merdeka opposed the US stand in moderate terms. The leftist press continued these moderate attacks after Foreign Minister Subandrio announced that the Indonesian government was urging the US and Soviet governments to negotiate the issue and avoid entering into armed hostilities. The pro-government and rightist press either remained editorially silent or called for negotiation and cool heads.

The communists laid plans for a demonstration against the US Embassy, and for a dockworkers strike against American ships in Indonesian ports, but they were postponed when approval was not forthcoming from Sukarno. Indonesian military sources indicate that any communist demonstrations or strikes would have been halted by the Army in the absence of a decision by Sukarno. The PKI decided to hold demonstrations in any case if Sukarno's speech on October 30 expressed any anti-US sentiments. Since his speech did not contain any reference to Cuba, no demonstrations have occurred and PKI has not yet put forth a new policy.

Sukarno seems to have realized that the US stand on Cuba was a serious one and that it was not to his best interest to become involved in the dispute before he was sure of the direction events would take. He may also have been influenced by a message from President Kennedy at the beginning of the crisis. Moreover, Soviet efforts were confined to explaining the Soviet position and apparently were not directed toward eliciting Sukarno's public support. It may well be that Sukarno saw an opportunity to become the mediator between the US and the USSR. There was an indication on October 27 in a statement by Subandrio that Sukarno would welcome such a role. He has sought to become a mediator in the past, for example at the Belgrade conference of unaligned nations in 1961. By refraining from inferences that the US is "imperialistic" and "aggressive" Sukarno may have been attempting to smooth the path toward a mediatory role by dispelling US suspicions that he is too far inclined toward the Soviet line.

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Indonesia appears to be entering a period of intense concern with its own internal problems. As the West Irian issue slowly recedes, the return of political activity will probably take precedence over most international problems. This was indicated at the meetings of the National Defense Council and the State Council, two of the policy making bodies of the government, on October 25, when discussion of the lifting of the state of emergency took precedence over the Cuban crisis and the Sino-Indian dispute. In this context the US stand on Cuba will have little effect. Of far more impact on the Indonesians was the US role in the West Irian crisis, which impact in turn can only be maintained by continued US sympathy toward Indonesian aspirations and continued US aid. On the other hand, Soviet prestige in Indonesia depends on its willingness to allow Indonesia more favorable terms of repayment of its debt with the Soviet Union. Soviet reasonableness about the bases in Cuba will mean little to the Indonesians if the USSR insists on the present repayment schedule.

MALAYA AND SINGAPORE

At the beginning of the Cuban crisis the Malayan government indicated its understanding of the US viewpoint. However, with Prime Minister Rahman visiting India the government did not issue a statement supporting the US.

The press reaction in Malaya and Singapore was critical of the US stand on Cuba, and suggested that it took the world to the brink of nuclear war. The USSR was also attacked for placing bases in Cuba. When the USSR agreed to dismantle its bases the press complimented both sides for using the UN to resolve their differences.

The Chinese population of Singapore tended to view the issue as a confrontation between the US and Cuba, with the US playing the role of a bully. The Barisan Socialist Party, a probable communist front, attacked the US blockade as piracy, but did not conduct any anti-American demonstrations, largely because of fear that the government would use the incident to arrest the Barisan leaders on the charge of inciting a riot. On November 1, the Barisan Socialist newspaper ignored Cuba and mentioned only in passing the "enlightened decision of the Soviet premier."

In general, there was more real concern over the Sino-Indian border dispute than the Cuban crisis. The Singapore Chinese, many of whom retain their ties with China, were openly for the Chinese. The Barisan Socialist Party gave voice to Chinese sympathies by accusing India of "narrow nationalism." Prime Minister Rahman of Malaya expressed the opposite point of view in his remarks at Bombay on October 28 when he charged Communist China with aggression and stated that Malayan sympathy was with India.

The US stand on Cuba will probably have little effect on Malaya beyond possibly helping to maintain the morale of the pro-Western government of Abdul Rahman. Malaya's present concern is the formation of Malaysia, and Malayan interest accordingly will tend to focus on the role of the US in the North Borneo dispute with the Philippines.

BURMA

Burma's reaction throughout the Cuban crisis was conditioned by: (1) disinclination as a neutral nation to take any public position on issues between major world powers so long as what Burma regards as its own vital interests are not concerned; and (2) the eruption of fighting in the Sino-Indian dispute near the Burmese border with the resultant fear that fighting might spread into Burma itself. As a consequence, official Burmese reaction was limited to the exhortation that nations support the UN and resolve their difficulties by negotiations through the UN. (The fact that Ne Win Aung Gyi, Tin Fe and other important members of the Union Revolutionary Council were in Upper Burma at the time undoubtedly also inhibited official expressions of opinion.)

Public reaction was limited by greater interest in the Sino-Indian conflict, and by the neutral stand of the Government which inhibited the free expression of views, particularly by military and civil officials and in academic circles. However, a majority of the thinking public probably favored the US action as overdue, proper, and reassuring.

The Burmese press reacted along predictable partisan lines, although several of the leading neutralist papers were more favorable to the US position than would normally be expected. To quote a leading newspaper editor close to the URC, "there is much more support in Burma for the US than will ever be reflected officially or in the press." That statement probably accurately sums up majority Burmese feeling on the issue.

The Cuban crisis will produce no immediate appreciable effect on Burmese Government policy in the East-West power struggle nor any important beneficial change in US-Burmese relations. Nevertheless the US stance on Cuba may strengthen the resolve of anti-communist military and civilian leaders. Taken in conjunction with the demonstration of US resolution to fight for South Vietnam, and our recent quick military buildup in Thailand, the evidence of our willingness to fight in Cuba should confirm these leaders in their confidence that they can rely on the US for assistance to Burma when Communist China threatens Burma's independence. Although this confidence is unlikely to produce changes in Burma's official position, it should strengthen Burmese will to withstand indirect diplomatic and economic pressures which Communist China will eventually choose to exert.

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These recent demonstrations of the US will to resist communism may also influence the thinking of General Ne Win, who has grown to doubt US determination over the past two years and who has consequently been tempted to make accommodation with Communist China the touchstone of Burma's foreign policy. (Evidence of Indian ability to resist the current Chinese military thrusts in NEFA and Ladakh and of our ability to provide swift, effective military aid to India would reinforce the effects of US action in Cuba.)

Nevertheless, Burma in the short run will probably continue:

- (1) to remain silent on and avoid involvement in, East-West conflicts whenever its most vital interests are not immediately and directly concerned;
- (2) to allow a mild pro-Communist Chinese attitude to color its foreign policy decisions; and
- (3) to be suspicious of US motives and actions in Burma.

Therefore, on balance, there will be no significant beneficial change in US relations with Burma because of our handling of the Cuban crisis.

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CAMBODIA

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Cambodian reaction to the Cuban crisis was limited by Prince Sihanouk's silence on the issue. When Sihanouk did speak, on October 26, he limited his response to supporting UN Secretary General U Thant's efforts to relieve tensions and to find a peaceful solution consonant with Cambodia's policy of neutralism. The Cambodian UN delegation was so instructed and on October 30, in response to our ambassador's request for support of the U.S. position in the UN, Sihanouk replied that Cambodia, in line with its policy of neutralism, could not take sides. According to one unconfirmed report, the Prince privately expressed support for Cuba and the U.S.S.R., calling the American action a clear-cut example of a large country menacing a small one, but said that he would reserve his official position pending the outcome of U Thant's intervention. The fact that Cambodia chose to announce that it had agreed to exchange diplomatic representation on the ambassadorial level with Cuba "in the interests of furthering peace" on October 24 in the midst of the Cuban crisis is probably indicative of Sihanouk's reaction.

Sihanouk's feelings were probably expressed by the official Bangkum weekly on October 28 in its lead editorial which declared that America had "sentimentally and morally" lost by its Cuban "adventure." The editorial concluded by drawing a comparison between U.S. actions in Cuba and U.S. refusal to provide Cambodia with "effective means to assure its own defense."

Other Cambodian press reaction tended to be slow in coming. Initially the press reported only world opinion. When Sihanouk continued to express no opinion, the extreme left-wing French and Chinese language papers gave vent to harsh criticism of the U.S. along customary lines. The neutral press was cautious and stuck to its neutralism. Only one editorial attacking Castro appeared. Following the publication October 29 of a Ministry of Information warning to foreign language newspapers to refrain from attacking countries with which Cambodia enjoyed friendly relations, criticism subsided. However, all in all, press reaction was unfavorable to the U.S.

Public reaction was not reported. Presumably there was little or none which did not echo that of Prince Sihanouk.

The implications of the continuing border incidents involving Cambodia with South Vietnam and with Thailand, and of Sihanouk's present inability to get more rather than less U.S. military aid have much more important unfavorable connotations for the U.S. position in Cambodia than Cambodian reactions to American actions in the Cuban crisis.

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Sihanouk's draft plan for guarantees of Cambodian independence and territorial integrity has not been officially sent to the Geneva Powers, which he believes should be signatories. It has been approved by the National Assembly and presumably only the Cuban crisis has delayed its delivery. Should Western response be essentially negative, Sihanouk would find it difficult to resist drastic action even if it mean the loss of U.S. military aid and the termination of the MACG mission in Cambodia. Cambodia's unfortunate tendency to liken its plight to that of Castro's Cuba can only stiffen this determination.

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